

DEFINING OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND FOR THE PURPOSES OF WIA
Recommendation from the Occupational Forecasting Conference

Issue: The preamble to the final regulations governing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) states, “Section 663.310 requires that, to receive training, an individual must select a program of services directly linked to **occupations in demand** in the area, based on information provided by the One-Stop operator or partner.”¹ For the purposes of WIA, how should “occupations in demand” be defined? The Occupational Forecasting Conference is providing the following recommendation to the Workforce Commission for consideration to establish acceptable standards for defining occupations in demand.

Discussion: There are different levels of “demand,” including criteria that define the “Top Demand Occupations.” At issue is the question of how local areas define “occupations in demand” for the purposes of WIA. Various localities are likely to range from very stringent to very loose definitions of demand. The Top Demand Occupations reflect a high level of demand, but arguably there are other sources of demand information that may reflect either a lower level of demand (but demand nonetheless) or short-term demand rather than long-term. The objective of the proceeding pages is to provide guidance for the local Workforce Investment Boards in determining occupations in demand. As this is a policy decision, the Occupational Forecasting Conference is forwarding this draft to the Workforce Commission for consideration and adoption. This draft has been reviewed and edited with input from the Department of Labor’s Office of Workforce Development.

¹ 20 CFR Part 652 et al. Workforce Investment Act; Final Rules; p. 49327

Approved Occupations in Demand – Recommendation from the Occupational Forecasting Conference

General: Level 1 and level 2 demand occupations are only derived at the regional labor market area (RLMA). In order for an occupation to be added to the demand list under level 3, an annual demand of *15 will be determined at the RLMA, **but may** include area(s) outside the RLMA. For example, RLMA 3, which is comprised of three parishes, may be limited in the ability to derive a demand of 15 for an occupation. Therefore, it would be acceptable to include area(s) within typical commuting patterns to the RLMA in determining the demand for an occupation.

Note that if the WIA participant declares intent to relocate, the listing from the region to which she/he plans to relocate should be considered.

Level 1: Top Demand

Any occupation that appears on the Top Demand Occupations list for that particular region as approved by the Occupational Forecasting Conference shall automatically be considered a demand occupation for WIA purposes.

Level 2: Demand

Occupations that appear in the Louisiana Department of Labor's occupational projections that reflect **20** or more annual openings shall automatically be considered a demand occupation for WIA purposes.

Level 3: Locally determined:

Occupations in demand as determined by the Local Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Supporting documentation from reputable sources must be included. These occupations should be reviewed on an annual basis to determine continued inclusion on the list.

a) Job Orders:

Bona fide job listings through the Louisiana Department of Labor, local newspaper, or other reputable Internet sites (i.e. America's Job Bank (AJB), Monster.com, etc.). The number of non-duplicated regional listings should be no less than **five** openings over a 4-month period which translates to ***15** in a 12-month period.

b) Employer Surveys:

Employer surveys that try to determine current and projected occupational shortages. Local WIBs, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, business and trade organizations, LDOL, and/or academic institutions can conduct surveys. Results should support an annual demand of ***15** or more.

c) Targeted Industries:

Identified occupations within "targeted industries"; to be locally determined by the local WIBs, through coordination with chambers of commerce, economic development entities, and business and trade organizations. Such targeted industries may be identified in economic development plans whose objectives are to attract or expand specific industry

sectors within the region. It should be demonstrated that occupations within these industries would result in an annual demand of *15 or more.

d) Other: Identified occupations that are not justified in 3 a, b, & c. Inclusion of these occupations to the RLMA demand list **must** be substantiated with documentation which is subject to review by the Louisiana Department of Labor and the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

** The total annual demand figures were rounded in the occupational forecasting process; hence, any value 15 - 24 would round to 20. Using 20 as the threshold would be in accordance with the criteria established in the process of developing the top demand occupations, previously adopted by the OFC.*